DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 434 111 SP 038 799

AUTHOR Reyes, Celia R.; McNabb, Eldon
TITLE Expanding and Diversifying the Teaching Work Force. Building on Local Talent and Community Funds of Knowledge.
INSTITUTION WestEd, San Francisco, CA.
PUB DATE 1998-07-00
NOTE 23p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Bilingual Teachers; *Diversity (Faculty); Diversity (Student); Elementary Secondary Education; *Literacy Education; Multicultural Education; *Paraprofessional School Personnel; Preservice Teacher Education; Seminars
IDENTIFIERS California

ABSTRACT

This paper describes the Model Support System for Paraprofessionals (MSSP), which is designed to diversify and expand the teaching force in one California county by supporting promising bilingual paraprofessionals enrolled in college and university programs leading to bilingual credentials. All participants are currently non-certified staff members who have as their chief responsibility students from diverse linguistic and ethnic backgrounds. After discussing the need to expand and diversify the teaching profession, this paper describes the MSSP, focusing on: critical supports needed for bilingual paraprofessionals; the need to encourage local talent; other existing paraeducator projects; the MSSP's unique goal of enhancing and strengthening literacy through the development of voice and the cultural/linguistic knowledge base participants already have; working partnerships involved in the MSSP; funding sources; completion rates; seminar series; core premises; core components; the MSSP's Saturday Seminars on literacy development; bilingual/bicultural literacy and the development of real voice; participants' resiliency, determination, and courage; extra support for participants; the working of the model; funding and administration; participant recruitment and selection; training sites; second year recruits; and maximizing resources. (Contains 18 references.) (SM)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 434 111

Expanding and Diversifying the Teaching Work Force

Building On Local Talent and Community Funds of Knowledge

July 1998

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

SP038799

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

T. Ross

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

WestEd

Improving Education through Research, Development and Service

Expanding and Diversifying the Teaching Work Force

Building On Local Talent and Community Funds of Knowledge

---

by Celia R. Reyes, Ph.D
WestEd

with Eldon McNabb, M.A.
Cutler-Orosi Unified School District

July 1998

INTRODUCTION

The Model Support System for Paraprofessionals (MSSP) is developing in Tulare County, California, through partnerships among the county office of education, local school districts, the local community college and WestEd. Its purpose is to expand and diversify the teaching force by supporting promising bilingual paraprofessionals enrolled in college and university programs leading to bilingual credentials. The participants are currently non-certified staff members who often have the chief instructional responsibility for students from diverse linguistic and ethnic backgrounds and who are residents of the communities they serve. After two years in the program, the first three graduates of the MSSP have completed their bilingual credentials and will be employed as full-time teachers in Fall 1998. Eight other participants have completed B.A. Degrees and are enrolled in either internship or regular credential programs. Nine others are now upper-division students and 12 are completing lower-division requirements.

The model is a direct means of improving the quality of instruction offered today's language minority students. It operates alongside the required university curriculum and provides the academic and socio-cultural support participants need to successfully complete bilingual credential programs. Literacy development is strengthened through the development of "voice" in spoken and written discourse. Eldon McNabb and Celia Reyes, seminar leaders, have coached and accompanied many of the participants who have shared their experiences and success at local, state and national conferences. Also, critical pedagogy is introduced and practiced as a means of addressing inequities and disparities in classroom interaction and instruction. Participants are a cohesive group within the principal structure of the program, "Saturday Seminars"; this is not the case at the university settings. Enrolled at a total of eight institutions, five community colleges and three state universities, participants sometimes have classes together, but it is not by design or as a result of a partnership with the institution of higher education (IHE).

The MSSP will be re-created at Fresno Pacific University at both the undergraduate and graduate (fifth year credential) levels as part of a Title VII Career Ladder Program beginning in Fall 1998. The model structure can be easily adapted to accommodate different needs and conditions.

While still midway in our five year development, this approach shows great promise. We've seen enormous growth not only in skills but self-confidence so essential to academic success. So while continuing to learn, we think it valuable to share our approach, even at this early stage, with other educators, especially those interested in expanding and diversifying the teacher work force effectively — that is resulting in "talented, dedicated and well-prepared teachers" in every classroom as quickly as possible. This paper looks briefly at the need and rationale for training paraprofessionals, explains the core premises underlying our approach, then outlines how the model works. The names of the program participants are fictitious to ensure their privacy.

CASTING THE NET WIDER TO EXPAND AND DIVERSIFY THE TEACHING PROFESSION

Our country's long-term need for more teachers is particularly pressing in California, the largest state in the western region. Assuming a pupil-teacher ratio of 24:1 (the average in 1995-96), this state will need an additional 41,500 teachers in the next decade, or about 4,150 teachers per year, just to keep pace with increasing enrollment. These estimates do not take into account retirements and attrition. Half of California's teachers are now over 45, one out of six is over 55, and about half of all new teachers leave the profession in less than a year.

For schools serving California's rapidly growing numbers of students from diverse ethnic and linguistic backgrounds, this teacher shortage is especially acute. Between 1986 and 1997, the number of limited English proficient students more than doubled, rising from 600,000 to 1,400,000, leaving a deficit of more than 20,000 bilingual teachers — a shortage increased by yet another 6,000 due to the state's new class-size reduction program. (Norman C. Gold, 1997) California and the other states in the region especially need teachers who are prepared to teach effectively in increasingly diverse environments.

The profile of the teaching work force in California is a microcosm of the national scene. In 1981, the teaching work force was 83 percent white, declining slightly to 81 percent by 1993. During that same period, however, the nonwhite K-12 student population had climbed from 43 percent to 58 percent. (California State University Institute for Educational Reform, /19/) Thus, in a state where white English-speaking students are now a minority, the vast majority of teachers are neither minority nor bilingual.

The most comprehensive longitudinal research on English learners underscores the critical role that primary language development plays in academic achievement. (Collier & Thomas, 1996) Moreover, evidence suggests that students benefit from having well-trained teachers who come from similar ethnic and linguistic backgrounds, who can contribute to the students' sense of belonging and, ultimately, their achievement. Yet nationwide only 20 percent of candidates enrolled for a bachelor's degree in education are members of a minority group (AACTE, 1997), which means that those most able to become competent and well-trained bicultural-bilingual teachers are not currently in the system.

Research conducted in 1997 at the local level, by the Fresno Unified School District, offers insights on why many linguistic minority students may not be enrolled in BA degree programs in Education or other fields. This study found that the drop-out rate for limited English proficient and redesignated fluent English proficient students is usually greater than the drop-out rate for English-only speakers. Moreover, even those who manage to finish school often are not adequately prepared to compete in four year colleges. A study by the California State University Fresno Foundation in 1996, found that systemwide, 43 percent of entering freshman were tracked into remedial English classes. At the Fresno campus the percentage was even higher at 51 percent. "Remedial placement" translates into higher non-completion rates among linguistic minorities than among their English-only counterparts. Together, the findings from both these studies

mandate that a significant component of an effective program for diversifying the teacher work force must be a strong, coherent, instructional program in biliteracy development.

Bilingual paraprofessionals offer the immediate prospect of addressing the multicultural, multilingual needs in both classrooms and society. Many of these instructional assistants are high school graduates who — for any number of reasons — did not enroll in colleges immediately after graduation. They constitute a pool of potential teachers who already have much of the linguistic and cultural knowledge needed to provide the bilingual and culturally-relevant teaching linguistic-minority students need in order to succeed. Yet, too often this potential goes untapped. Instead, school districts follow a slower, more circuitous route for serving their growing numbers of second language learners.

Districts with a documented shortage of bilingual teachers are required by the California Department of Education (CDE) to remedy the lack through a plan for recruitment, hiring, and training. But the limited supply of bilingual candidates matriculating from local colleges and universities thwart recruitment and hiring efforts, forcing districts to rely instead on training some of their own teachers. By this process teachers wishing to become bilingual, identified as "Teachers in Training," are enrolled in intensive language, culture, and methodology courses to meet the state credentialing requirements. While these teachers are in training, paraprofessionals already fluent in the students' home language are placed in their classrooms to provide primary language instruction to the students. By recent count 30,840 of these bilingual paraprofessionals instruct English learners in California. (The 1997 Language Census Report for California Public Schools) In Tulare, Kings, and Kern Counties where our program participants work, there are 1,181 bilingual paraprofessionals, 416 of them teamed with Teachers in Training.

Districts can augment their current training goals to include paraprofessionals and remedy their shortages of qualified bilingual teachers at an accelerated rate. At the same time, a serendipitous benefit of this program is that the district will receive services from teachers at the beginning steps of the salary schedule who, in most cases, have had years of classroom experience with the very types of students whose needs they have been hired to meet.

To draw on this untapped resource, our project set out to develop a support system through which these bilingual/bicultural paraprofessionals, currently providing the instruction, could more quickly help expand and diversify the teaching work force and improve the quality of instruction offered to English learners and other linguistic minority students enrolled in the region's public schools. To create an effective support system, we must recruit, train and support those who are already working well with students. The group targeted for this project, bilingual instructional assistants, offers promise of rich success using this strategy.

In general, paraprofessionals are committed to working in their communities after they earn their credentials. As members of the communities they serve, they can learn to affirm and build on their community's intellectual strengths and "funds of knowledge" as the basis for developing the personal, intellectual, social and academic

achievement of the thousands of language minority students in U.S. classrooms. In fact, we need teachers of color who bring more than ethnicity. We need teachers with the knowledge and pedagogy for dealing with inequities in our society and schools. We need advocates and mentors whose skills translate into student learning. The next sections 1) explain how we shaped the model utilizing the principal strategy, building on "community funds of knowledge," 2) describe the core premises underlying our approach, and 3) outline how the models works.

THE MODEL SUPPORT SYSTEM FOR PARAPROFESSIONALS (MSSP)

Critical Support

For many paraprofessionals wishing to become teachers, the route is difficult. One of the biggest barriers paraprofessionals from minority groups face is a *socio-political* one. Most are women who are expected to continue with traditional family responsibilities even while attending school and working. In addition, many of these women lack role models to emulate; they may be the first women in their families to attend college or even graduate from high school. A second barrier to paraprofessionals is *academic* in nature. Many do not have adequate literacy and/or mathematics proficiency to succeed in college-level courses. Although they have abundant experience working with students, many have not had much experience being students themselves. As a result, they frequently lack self-confidence as students and are especially anxious about test-taking situations.

Local Talent

The criteria for admission to the program underscores the goal of building on the local talent present in the communities. MSSP participants must have at least one year of experience as bilingual instructional assistants. (Most participants have a minimum of five years and some have as many as 16.) They must be bilingual/biliterate in a language needed in Tulare and Kings counties. Preference is given to paraprofessionals currently enrolled in two or four year colleges with a G.P.A. of 2.75 or higher. They must agree to successfully carry nine or more units per semester and a G.P.A. of 2.9 per semester/quarter; carrying this many units would enable most, if not all, to complete their degrees and credentials during the five years of funding. They must attend Saturday Seminars (13 total) held throughout the school year, September through May.

Other Paraeducator Projects

About three quarters of the paraeducator-to-teacher projects studied by Haselkorn and Fideler (1996), recruit paraeducators into "regular" university coursework. The remaining quarter provide a more tailored approach. There are, however, program characteristics that cut across these links which are often elements of non-traditional teacher education models. For example: field-based learning, competency based assessment, continuing education, summer and weekend coursework, internships, mentoring, and links to the community to suit local preferences and paraeducators' needs. A few of the programs get guidance from the Federal Career Opportunities for Paraprofessionals program from the 1970s; district "grow your own" efforts; cross-

cultural and bilingual education programs; or the handful of well-established union-sponsored career ladders for paraprofessionals. /49/

The MSSP is neither just "regular" university course work nor a more tailored program. However, the seminar experience, the "heart of the model," has characteristics of both a regular and a tailored program. MSSP participants are enrolled in regular university course work leading to a bilingual credential. The MSSP operates alongside the participants' university experience but not as an alternative to the teacher preparation program. Rather, it works to strengthen participants' literacy skills to ensure academic success at the IHEs. Participants are enrolled in undergraduate work for a liberal studies major with other students (pre-requisite for the bilingual credential) and subsequently, or sometimes simultaneously, courses leading to the bilingual credential: language structure and first and second language development, methodology of bilingual, English language development and content instruction, culture and cultural diversity, and methodology for primary language instruction. At the same time, MSSP seminars are held as weekend sessions which include, mentoring, peer counseling, and instructional strategies designed to build on the funds of knowledge that the participants already have as members of the diverse communities in which they will soon teach.

An Unique Goal

The unique goal of the MSSP is to enhance and strengthen literacy through the full development of voice and the cultural/linguistic knowledge base the participants already have. "Voice" represents the unique self-expression which honors the life experiences and learnings individuals develop as a result of their own history. The voices of multilingual, multicultural people are too often silent in university and K-12 classrooms. We work with our participants on the development of their "real voices" so that multilingual voices, and multicultural experiences, will come to be both appreciated and expected in university settings, and in their future classrooms. We build on the experiential knowledge about classroom learning and practice that these non-traditional students already possess.

Working Partnerships

The building of the model began in Tulare County, CA in January, 1996. It is carried out through working partnerships between and among WestEd, the Tulare County Office of Education (TCOE), Kings County Office of Education, Cutler-Orosi Unified School District, College of the Sequoias (COS) and the participants themselves. Business relationships have also been established between the registrars and bookstores at five community colleges and CSU campuses at Bakersfield, Fresno, and Sacramento. TCOE is billed directly by the IHEs for fees and books.

Funding

The funding source for the participants is the Bilingual Teacher Recruitment Program (BTRP), administered through the Chancellor's Office of the California State University System. In Spring 1996, the TCOE and COS received one of the 23 five-year

BTRP grants from the Curriculum and Instructional Leadership Branch of the CDE to increase the supply of bilingual teachers and the number of under-represented minorities entering the teaching profession. The yearly Operating Budget for the MSSP includes $84,000 from the BTRP grant and approximately $88,000. in kind from TCOE and WestEd for staff and administration. BTRP is also the name of the particular project in Tulare County. References to the MSSP and the BTRP refer to the same program.

Completion Rates

There are 32 participants in the program. Twenty were enrolled during the 1996-97 academic year and 12 more were recruited for 1997-98. The group includes: 28 females, four males; 29 Spanish speakers; two Hmong speakers; and one Mien speaker. Three participants graduated in Spring 1998; 29 participants will continue in the fall. The programs studied by Haselkorn and Fideler report an average length of time to completion at three and one half years. /49-50/ Although it is still too soon to calculate an overall average for the MSSP participants, it is clear that many will complete the program in three years or less (initial standings at the IHEs, upper division or lower d vision, and units carried per term are the critical factors). At the same time, it is also clear that the model supports individual initiative and allows participants to progress as quickly as they are able. Participants must carry nine units per term but could carry more because the cost to the program is the same. Many carry almost twice as many units per term.

Seminar Series

The paraprofessionals and trainers, Celia R. Reyes, from WestEd, and Eldon McNabb, from Cutler-Orosi Unified School District, create a community of support during 13 seminars held on Saturdays. These seminars help paraprofessionals develop the academic discourse and literacy/biliteracy skills necessary to successfully complete their degrees and credentials. In California, the credential requirements are completed during the fifth year. During these seminars, the participants share with each other the knowledge and insights they've gained while completing educational requirements, working in classrooms, parenting, and remaining important members of their families and communities. The sessions also include outreach activities to help the paraprofessionals and their families understand the changes that will occur for everyone and to help secure the support the participants will need to successfully continue their education.

Core Premises

The model is grounded in two core premises. The first is: The funds of knowledge that these participants bring with them to the teaching profession — their history, voice, reading of the world — are the perspectives needed to expand and diversify the teaching profession and transform educational conditions into more powerful experiences for themselves, their students and families. The concept, "funds of knowledge," comes from a sociocultural perspective on educational practice which suggests: The local community represents a cultural and intellectual resource of enormous importance for educational change and improvement. (Moll, 1992)

Families with limited incomes, as are the majority of families whose children are enrolled in U.S. public school bilingual education programs, are always connected to other households and institutions through diverse social networks. These networks form social contexts for the acquisition of knowledge, skills and information, as well as cultural values and norms. One sample of 30 households of rural origin revealed an impressive array of knowledge and skills that included: ranching and farming, animal husbandry, timbering, crop planting, soil and irrigation systems, market values, appraising, loans, labor laws, cooking, appliance repair, carpentry, roofing, masonry, folk medicine, folk cures, folk veterinary cures, moral knowledge and ethics, etc. (Moll, 1992, / 21-22/)

MSSP participants have a cultural base, a lived-understanding of how their communities make use of knowledge in order to survive. They know the meaning that education holds for ethnic groups represented in central valley classrooms. At the same time, they know that their knowledge was not affirmed in the public schools they attended. Many experienced the denial that any cultural practice or way of knowing, different from the mainstream, is of value. They know first hand the biased educational practices that denied them entry into advanced literature and math classes because they were second language learners and "belonged in ESL." In the face of this racism and discrimination they, like the communities they're part of, learned strategies for surviving and succeeding.

Research has long confirmed that there is a significant correlation between positive self-concept and a student's opportunity to learn and develop academically within a school setting that respects and affirms the child's culture (Powell, 1970). The participants' bilingual skills can make a classroom a welcoming and psychologically safe place for second language learners, a place where instruction can be offered in the students' primary language to ensure academic achievement while they learn English as a second language and become full bilinguals. They know how mainstream instructional practice can conflict with cultural values — for example, offering the right answer at times when it would embarrass or even shame someone else in front of the group. While much of this knowledge may be only tacit when they begin formal study for their bilingual credentials, the seminar teachers work with participants to make it more explicit, a "meta-knowledge" they can reflect on and refine. The participants come "to know what they know" and the seminar teachers affirm this knowledge base. By bringing their knowledge to the fore, these future teachers will be able to help their own students build on their rich knowledge.

The second core premise of the model is: Traditional theories of bilingual-bicultural education which limit their focus to issues of language are not adequate; to address the core issue of education, academic achievement, we must move beyond language learning and examine the connections among power, politics, equity, and racism in society and in the schools. Teachers must be fully literate and academically successful, understand how schools reflect societal practice, how to unpack the disparities, provide equitable and ample opportunities to learn and move toward a more participatory democracy.

Two of the most challenging issues facing us as a nation are 1) the intractable racism and discrimination which characterize our society and which are practiced through our institutions, including our schools, and 2) the large demographic changes that are bringing into sharper focus our history as a multilingual and multicultural nation. Ample research demonstrates how institutionalized racism manifests itself in classrooms. "Students of color," as Donaldson (1996) states, "in both urban and suburban schools, are subjected to inequality through smaller amounts of instructional time given, biased texts and curricula, harsh sanctions (suspension and detention), lowered teacher expectations, and teacher/administrator and school denial of racist actions." BTRP participants voice their own experiences with similar inequities during the seminar sessions.

If the cycle is to be broken and educational programming for English learners to be improved, these future teachers must experience and succeed in both higher level literacy practices and challenging math. They must offer their students much more than the educational programming usually offered students from working class families, chiefly rote, drill and practice, ... intellectually limited with an emphasis on low-level literacy and computational skills. (Anyon, 1981)

Research on bilingual education is typically confined to issues of language dominance, how to use the first language in instruction, when to transfer or mainstream students to English-only instruction, and what kinds of tests could be used to evaluate the effectiveness of one program over another. (Moll, 1992, /20/) This focus is far too limited and fails to deal with the critical issue of "academic achievement" necessary for full participation in a democracy. Participation is the foundation of democracy, and people can only participate when they have a voice in deciding and expressing what actions need to be taken for the common good. (Park, in press)

Core Components

This requires that they begin to unpack the questions of power and politics in a supportive and non-threatening environment, such as that provided through the following core MSSP components:

- developing a community of support among the participants, where they can share insights and information they have gained through cultural, academic, social, intellectual and other life experiences;
- developing full literacy through the explicit and intentional recognition of "voice" in both oral and written discourse so that participants, individually and collectively, become empowered and reflective practitioners able to address the social inequities and injustices in society mirrored in the educational system;
- developing proficiency in writing, especially in academic literacy;
- modeling through the seminar sessions exemplary classroom practices and environments where academic achievement builds on the "funds of knowledge" and multicultural voices of the students and their families;

- training on specific test-taking strategies that lead to passing scores on the California Basic Education Skills Test (CBEST), required for admission to all California credential programs;
- frequent recognition and celebration of successes, large and small;
- financial support to cover tuition, books, registration and lodging fees for the statewide bilingual education conference, registration fees for three test sessions on CBEST; and,
- establishing and sustaining working-partnerships at the district, county, college and university levels so that the program can be implemented and institutionalized to meet future teacher workforce needs.

Saturday Seminars: The Heart of It

The MSSP is a web of support made up of academic, social and financial components embedded in the cultural contexts familiar to the participants. "Saturday Seminars," as they have come to be called, focus on literacy development through critical reading and writing. During 13 seminars, held once or twice a month during the academic year, we model exemplary practices participants can use in their own classrooms, such as cooperative learning, readers' theater, and jigsaw reading. We recognize the funds of knowledge that the participants bring with them from their own communities — Latino, Vietnamese and Mien. Their understanding, insights, and experience with their students become the starting points and frames for discussions on teaching, bilingual education, and the development of literacy skills they will need to succeed at the university.

A brief look at a typical seminar session, which took place in mid-January as the participants returned from semester break, can help illustrate our approach. The session usually begins with a discussion period on the workings of the program and such "housekeeping" tasks as registration or grade card reports. Participants will often ask for information or clarification about intersession fees, tutors and the like during this time slot. Coffee, tea, juice, rolls and fruit are usually available for everyone.

Before moving into this session's formal content, the seminar teachers ask if the participants have received their CBEST scores. In early December, 15 of them took all or parts of the CBEST exam. In fact, they received their scores during the week and are anxious to share them with the group. This event is of interest to everyone because those who had already passed the CBEST served as tutors for their colleagues during the fall seminars. The group re-assembles into a large circle so everyone can see each other during the conversation. There is great satisfaction, many happy faces, smiles, applause, and much excitement in the room as each person reports on their progress. Many of those who took the test for the first time have passed one or more sections. Even those who did not pass on the first try are already articulating the lessons they learned from simply taking the test and the strategies they will use the next time. (Passing scores on the CBEST are required for admission into a credential program in California. The failure rate for cultural/linguistic minorities on this test is especially high. So high, in

fact, that the test has been challenged in court for bias against these groups.) Everyone is congratulated and applauded again and the group takes a 15 minute break.

Seminars generally last three hours. Participants will come back for 90 minutes more after the break and are free to go to the rest-room and replenish their coffee any time they wish. The schedule is generally determined by the activities planned for that day.

The next portion of the seminar focuses on the issue of "voice" through reading and discussing a research report from the Claremont Graduate School of Education, Voices From the Inside. This research, carried on in four Southern California public schools in during an 18 month period, focuses on the broad question: "What is the Problem of Schooling?" The research process included students, teachers, classified staff, administrators and parents. Direct quotes and clear voices resonate throughout the text.

McNabb, the seminar teacher for this portion of the session, begins with a few introductory remarks about research on the schools and asks participants to do a five-minute freewrite on the topic: the problem of schooling. After this exercise, the whole group brainstorms a list of problem areas in schooling, written on chart paper for all to view. The list includes:

- lack of supplies
- discipline
- communication
- politics, i.e., regulations
- a shortage of time
- an emphasis on "getting through the book"
- lack of parent involvement
- school staffs that do not work together
- lack of agreement on the purpose of schooling
- lack of a consistent (coherent) curriculum
- more emphasis on language acquisition than academic development.

Eldon then moves the focus of the discussion to the structure of the report and a short summary of its findings, which fall into seven major themes: Relationships; Race, Culture, and Class; Values; Teaching and Learning; Safety; Physical Environment; Despair, Hope and the Process of Change. Eldon helps participants see the congruency between the list of problems they generated and the research findings.

He then divides the participants into smaller home groups, assigning each member of the group to read a section of the text. After the allotted reading time, (generally 15-20 minutes depending on the length and difficulty of the text) all who were reading a specified section come together as an expert group to share their understanding of that section of the text and write a summary to take back and share with their home group.

At this point, Eldon adjusts the exercise because there's not enough time to go back to home groups and share in small groups and as a whole. (In a regular jigsaw exercise, after the expert groups had discussed and written their section, each individual expert would return to their home groups and share the knowledge and summary from their expert group. In the home groups each individual would present the summary and

understanding of the section to the rest of their home group. In this way, all members would have a beginning understanding of the whole text and a more in-depth understanding of one section.) Instead of returning to home groups, each groups of experts reported on their specific section to the group at large. After each expert group had shared their summary of each section, the participants were asked to re-read their original writing (the initial freewrite exercise) and add any new points or understanding about the issue.

This jigsaw reading technique facilitates the second reading or additional study that the participants will do on their own. It is especially useful for building literacy skills among second language learners through cooperation and sharing knowledge in a structured and orderly way. In previous jigsaw exercises we had discussed the importance of organizing groups in the classroom so that strong readers and developing readers could help each other.

At the next seminar session, participants were asked to re-read their writing and once again add to it. They then shared their thoughts and writing in small groups (not their original home groups). Those who had been absent at the first session where assigned to scan the section of the article studied at the previous session and were integrated into groups who had done the assignment during the previous seminar.

Seminar activities like these emphasize and support the participants' recognition and use of their own "voices." Engaging in conversations and discussions critical for becoming full members of the teaching profession, participants explore their own experience with words, both inside and outside educational settings. The facility they already have in two languages — their voice — is encouraged and enhanced through the work done during the Saturday Seminars.

Over the course of two years, the participants have created "a community of learners." Lupe, one of the participants, explains what that support means to her:

> It's not only academic counseling that we get — which is great! Just thinking about transferring to the CSU, it's scary. You don't know anybody. It's so reassuring to come back here and meet people. It's very hard for me to make friends. We have really bonded. I became more social. And I honestly feel that we're creating a network. I don't feel that we're going to finish and leave and that's it. I can see myself in three or four years calling **X** and saying: I'm getting ready to do this Unit and I don't have anything ... we're creating it; we're going to be in touch forever! It's so helpful hearing *other voices — other ideas*. It's great! ... the support — the moral support that we get from this group, this program. (Lupe)

The term, "community of learners," may not aptly describe this experience. There is an expression in Spanish, *estar en familia.* It means you are with family. Calling the group "a family of learners" is more accurate. They share personal knowledge and experience about what it means to go through a public school system without the linguistic and cognitive support needed. They are a closely knit, multi-age group, whose members teach one another about professors-to-avoid, those not to miss, and

what advising procedures are most helpful; they also share what they've learned about successfully completing assignments given in required classes.

Seminar sessions provided the structure and opportunities for the participants to get to know each other as learners and colleagues, and to share problems, challenges, solutions, and strategies for resiliency and success. They are a forum for healing the old and, unfortunately, new hurts resulting from racist and/or discriminatory practices in the settings where they live, work and study. They care about and "take care" of each other as they walk the same road together. This climate, where all are at ease, makes it possible and more likely that participants will learn from each other — recognize their own and each other's knowledge — which in turn will enable them to recognize and use the knowledge their diverse students bring with them as the starting point for instructional practice.

Bilingual/Bicultural Literacy and the Development of Real Voice

When students become conscious, knowledgeable users of their own and other discourse systems, they are more able to avoid linguistic and cultural biases. At the same time, they have greater possibilities for realizing their intellectual potential. (Patrick Courts, *Multicultural Literacies*, 1997, /2/) Our participants are all members of communities whose voices are rarely heard or affirmed in university or academic settings in the United States. They represent communities of color and/or the poor. Students who experience what Macedo (1994) calls "a pedagogy of exclusion" because of their race, ethnicity, culture and language, often do not enroll in or graduate from institutions of higher education. Consequently, bilingual-bicultural teachers, able to recognize and affirm the knowledge base linguistic minority students bring to school, are not in K-12 classrooms.

The unique feature of the MSSP is its focus on enhancing and strengthening literacy through the full development of voice. The aim is not to *give* people voice because that is not something anyone can do for someone else. The participants already possess power. Rather, it is about creating structures that will enable *submerged voices* to emerge. Voice is not a gift but rather a human and democratic right (Macedo, /4/ italics added). Participants develop their own voice chiefly through writing. We see the kind of relationship between a person's development and her writing that Alice Walker voiced in her description of Celie for the film, *The Color Purple*, in the screenplay that was never used: "she begins to create herself through her writing (and without her writing it is clear she would have remained unformed, even to herself)." (Walker, 1996 /51/ Although our participants are not as underdeveloped as Walker's character Celie, it became clear during the first 18 months of the project that few have had sufficient opportunities to become skilled writers. Most are gleeful about the writing they produce and conscious of the power literacy gives them.

Our literacy practices are framed around Paulo Freire's pivotal idea that we first read the world before we learn to read the word. "Our own histories, cultures, social class and languages shape our realities. Relationships of oppressed and oppressors cannot be denied; therefore learning to read implies a process of ... becoming aware of the social interactions, and relationships of power between oppressors and oppressed and transformation." (Rubinstein, 1997, /5/)

During Spring 1997, we began the study of Freire's initial work in literacy with adult peasants in Northeastern Brazil. Freire taught them to read in 30 hours. Graciela, one of our participants, saw a parallel between Freire's non-traditional approach to the teaching of reading and her own non-traditional status as a student and future teacher:

> In his method of teaching he's also non-traditional, like us; we're non-traditional. He's not using the same methods that all these teachers have used in the past — that have failed. I think that's part of the reason he's done so well. He's able to reach his students because of what they know and what they live with; he ties in that and allows them to succeed.

Freire's work is especially important to success with students, of any age, whose educational needs are not adequately addressed in the mainstream culture. Freire views literacy as a means of empowerment — a way to become fully human, able to use all of your faculties. This approach is the opposite of the usual curriculum (rote drill and practice, emphasizing low-level literacy and computational skills) offered to bilingual students in public schools.

The goal for the writing segment of the seminars is for participants to develop the academic literacy needed to complete degrees and credentials. Participants study the writing process and "editing" and "proofreading" take up their appropriate niches without interfering with the composing and "voicing" of thoughts in writing and speech. These practices make immediately clear two elements of the writing process: a sense of the importance of voice in writing and a sense of audience. Writing response groups operate during the seminars on a regular basis. They emphasize the "active involvement of group members — giving reactions, asking questions, making suggestions." (Healey, 1982) Participants come to understand and appreciate the development of their writing across multiple drafts.

Writing teacher Peter Elbow suggests that teaching students to use their "real voice" is a way to start people "on a train of growth and empowerment in their way of using words — empowerment even in relating to people." (1981) /294/ The seminars provided a space where each participant could listen to her/his own voice; recognize it, hear it in conversations, discussions, and writing. They come to know themselves through their thoughts, words, and reflections and over time develop their real voices. Moreover, they also discover "other voices" through polished writing on topics that are critical to their development as professionals in the field. This year's instruction included research articles on community funds of knowledge, affirmative action in academia, poetry, and an introduction to critical pedagogy.

The profound effect that training on voice in writing has had on the participants is best expressed by them:

> ... Having a voice was never part of who I was. My voice has always been an inaudible whisper.... When I was growing up, my confidence and self-esteem were constantly crushed and so therefore I felt like what I had to say wasn't important. I was always the person that listens to other people and thinks, "Gee I wish I could say it that way." My wish is to be able to say what's on my

mind, and to get it across with a positive impact.... My voice is plain and simple. Being honest about who you are is your voice. Voice will develop in time with confidence and self-esteem. It will be a life-long process because we are always changing. (Tita)

If someone had asked me six months ago what my voice was like, I would have said quiet and low. But had I known what was really meant by "voice," I probably would have answered, "unsure, timid, insecure...." Ever since I went back to school (last semester), my attitude has changed; therefore my voice has changed. I am now more aware of my "voice." Although I am still faced with some insecurities, my voice is more confident, secure, wistful.... (Mari)

Through these BTRP workshops and my college classes, I have developed more self-confidence about using my voice through writing. I really didn't know that when I was writing I was communicating what I thought and who I am. I just believed that any writing homework had to be what the teacher wanted, because it's what they agreed was right — sort of their own beliefs and thoughts. I guess that's why I hated writing, because I could never read the teachers' minds. (Alma)

Resiliency, Determination, Courage

Very few of the participants had had any formal training in writing before the seminar experience; they struggled with writing assignments all through their schooling. Amazingly, most of them still like to write; their resiliency, determination, and courage are evident in other ways as well. Participants' comments reflect an increase in self-confidence and positive attitudes about their academic success.

At first, I thought I was just content to be a teacher's aide all my life. This program has helped me break the barrier. I'm not going to be content until I'm a teacher. (Alma)

I'm in the classroom now and I'm at the grade level I want. The easier part would be to teach it. I know that part. I know I can do it. The hard part is to pass the academics and I'm doing the "hard part" now. I just need to pass.... this part is tougher and harder. I'm really pleased with my progress. *I really am!* I'm doing really well in my classes and I am more confident about my ability. (Berta)

Some adjustments have included changes in work load, responsibilities, and scheduling.

There are other people who are also in the same position I'm in. They have jobs and families and are also going to school to become teachers. I have talked to some of them and they go through the same things I go through. Before there were times I was so stressed that I'd come home in a bad mood. My children were so happy to see me and all I could see was a messy house. I'd get after my husband and they would start cleaning. Now I know there are

people in the same position. I just do whatever I have to do and do my homework. I know eventually this will someday pay off. (Carolina)

I've made many changes and adjustments in my lifestyle that have helped me. One of the things that I did first of all was quit my second job so that I could attend school full time. I'm finishing school faster than I would have if I hadn't quit that second job. I've also adjusted to not spending so much time with family. It has been hard, especially for my mother. (Francisca)

This program builds up my self-esteem. That's what I've seen with all of us. The meetings that I missed — I know I did miss out. Last quarter I took 28 units. I was there Monday through Saturday. I pulled it through. Now I'm taking 22 units. (Daniel)

Extra Support

Instruction also includes test taking strategies and review for the California Basic Educational Skills Test (CBEST). Taking and passing the CBEST was a challenge that preoccupied many of the participants. The first year, two full sessions were spent reviewing math in preparation for that section of the test. One additional session was spent taking a pre-test and reviewing test-taking strategies. Many of the participants were successful on one or more sections of the CBEST. Of the 20 participants:

- eleven passed the reading section;
- eight passed the math section;
- thirteen passed the writing section;
- five passed all sections.

Passing the CBEST is required for admission to California credential programs. The second year of the program, participants who had passed the CBEST became tutors for their peers. The test is especially challenging for second language learners because many of the items assume educational experiences that these students have not had.

Career ladder programs generally offer financial incentives to attract participants to the teaching profession. MSSP participants received tuition and book stipends. Sufficient funding was also available during the first year and participants could choose to attend the statewide bilingual education conference. Those who attended, enthusiastically shared what they learned with seminar colleagues.

One member who had attended a session in which the teacher made full use of music in the curriculum announced that she was now going to take guitar lessons so that she could use music in the classroom more often. Others reported on the exciting bilingual education programs they had visited during a pre-conference institute, They had not known about these programs before. The participants continued to speak of these experiences during future seminars and in their writing.

The MSSP also includes outreach activities to the participants' families to ensure support that is sometimes missing from traditional career ladder programs. For example, special lunches mark the end of a semester's coursework. Recognition Day

has become an annual event during the last seminar in May. Immediate and extended family members attend the event and affirm the participants. The day is marked with special food, music and a completion ceremony. Each participant is presented with a plaque commemorating the successful completion of the first year and a certificate for the current year's achievements. Over the two year period:

- three participants completed their credentials and graduated from the MSSP;
- ten participants completed their B.A. degrees;
- eight participants are enrolled in internship programs;
- one participant is enrolled in a regular credential program.

And during the same time frame, three participants have married; two participants have had babies; one participant is now a grandmother; and one participant is expecting in September 1998.

The Workings of the Model

The model was created and implemented through working-partnerships established in January, 1996. MSSP partners, Eldon McNabb, Cutler-Orosi Unified School District, Carmen Friesen, TCOE, and Celia Reyes, WestEd, had all worked with and trained bilingual paraprofessionals in Tulare County. Their experiences convinced them that the potential pool of bilingual teachers needed for Tulare and Kings Counties existed within the ranks of the hundreds of talented bilingual/bicultural paraprofessionals currently working in classrooms with large numbers of language minority students.

WestEd staff member, Reyes, organized a meeting with representatives of one large district, two smaller, more remote districts, the TCOE and the university staff person in charge of the Bilingual, Cross-Cultural, Language, Academic Development (BCLAD) credential program at California State University at Fresno. Although we also wanted a representative from the local community college, College of the Sequoias, we had not been able to locate a person who could work with us.

Funding and Administration

The group met to begin discussing possibilities for creating a system of support for qualified bilingual paraprofessionals committed to getting their BCLAD credential. One of the main topics on the agenda was funding for the system. This proved to be a non-issue. In the fall of 1995, TCOE and COS submitted a proposal to the CDE for a grant from the Bilingual Teacher Recruitment Program. At the same time that we began meeting to secure funding for the model, TCOE and COS received word that they had been awarded a five year grant to recruit and support teacher candidates from the ranks of the community college students and paraprofessionals. This announcement of the funding launched the making of the MSSP and also added a critical member of the partnership, Celia Maldonado, the EOP director at COS.

Initially, there were seven potential partners but by the fall of 1996 we were down to three "working" partners and two that could occasionally host a seminar session or attend a meeting. The partner in one of the smaller school districts had been

reassigned to the classroom and no longer participated in creating the model. Soon after the initial meeting, the university staff person left the university and her position was not filled again. To date we do not have a working partner at any of the four-year institutions that the participants attend. We've learned that partners in the field need to have the power to adjust their work schedule in order to help create the model. Our partners at the district and county offices have responsibility for programs for language minority students and can to a certain extent determine their own schedule.

The cuts in education budgets make starting a new administrative and/or training responsibility especially hard. The grant we received did not allow for any additional administrative costs. This was to be covered by TCOE with the small percentage of overhead provided. The partner at the county office was already overextended so initially the implementation of the program was handled by a partner at a small school district and the laboratory staff person.

The funding for the participants comes from the Bilingual Teacher Recruitment Program (BTRP), legislation established to address the critical need for bilingual teachers in the state. Friesen, TCOE, established business relationships between the registrars, bookstores at four community colleges, the CSU campuses at Bakersfield and Fresno and the TCOE. Registration and book fees are billed directly to the TCOE. The administration and implementation of the program is now carried out by Friesen, McNabb, and Reyes.

Other Funding Sources

Although funding is not currently an issue for us, there are sources we would have pursued had the BTRP funding not materialized. Districts that require the services of bilingual teachers are usually districts with high concentrations of poverty children as well as second language learners. These districts qualify for and receive supplemental state aid to help meet the unique needs of the students they serve. This supplemental funding comes from federal (i.e., Title I, Migrant, Immigrant, Title II, Title VII) as well as state sources (i.e., School Improvement, Economic Impact Aid). Each of these programs mandate staff development as a method of helping to meet student needs. Both Title I and Title VII, re-authorized through the Improving America's Schools Act (IASA), provide for the use of staff development funds for Career Ladder programs for teachers and instructional aides.

Many staff development programs serve to provide participants with techniques and strategies to better meet the identified student needs. What better way to meet the unique needs of second language learners than by providing the very training needed to qualify candidates for bilingual certification? Cost projections indicate that it is less costly to provide the needed training to qualify a bilingual paraprofessional for a teaching credential than to provide the years of intensive language training to qualify an already credentialed teacher for bilingual certification.

Recruitment and Selection

After the funding was secured, the plan was refined. Reyes and McNabb became the organizers and trainers for the Saturday Seminar Series; TCOE, the fiscal agent for

the grant, handled the coordination with the funding agency, the Chancellor's Office for the California State University System. The partners planned application and recruitment procedures and scheduled interviews for screening the candidates. Reyes developed a protocol for the screening process with input from the other partners. It contained a performance assessment for the primary language.

Flyers for an Information-Recruitment meeting, held at the county office in May, 1996, were disseminated through the county office and site administrators. We expected 30 applicants and received more than 100 applications. Twenty-two participants were selected from the pool and the program was launched with fall 1996 enrollment and the seminar series. Two paraprofessionals dropped out before the semester started. One dropped out because she already had her BA and was hired on an emergency credential by a school district because of the class-size reduction program. The other participant dropped out because she was running a preschool program and raising her own children, too. The additional burden of nine units of schooling proved to be too overwhelming. She continues her studies but carries a smaller load.

A Central Training Site

We decided that the sites for the training seminars would rotate around the districts as much as possible so that participants, who were likely to come from all over the counties, would alternate between longer and shorter commutes. Individual partners provided refreshments and a training space when they hosted the group in their district. Rotating the training sites did not prove to be a good strategy. Participants unfamiliar with the various locales got lost and/or were late arriving because they had misjudged the travel time needed. We used a central training location for the second year — the TCOE. The participants were also happy with this decision.

Second Year Recruits

New participants were recruited and selected during May, 1997. Some of the strongest candidates were those recruited by the current participants, who not only know now what it takes to be successful, but are also aware of who among their colleagues could complete the program. Our first three graduates as stated in a previous section completed their credentials in June, 1998.

The facility at the county office, in addition to providing a central location, also provides us with audio-visual equipment necessary for the seminars. The interactive format of the seminars requires small tables, easels, marking pens, chart paper, and an overhead projector. All these things are readily available at the county office because it also serves as a central training center for Tulare and Kings counties.

Maximizing Resources

During the second semester of the program we began videotaping the Saturday seminars in order to produce a documentary about the creation of the model and the visible growth in the participants. A video photographer, Alberto de Leon, was hired under a short-term contract with the Lab and quickly became a very important partner in the project.

In a project that focuses on the development of voice, it goes without saying that it is important to be able to hear the participants speak. In the beginning, the county office graciously loaned us small table microphones. The video camera, a "High 8," belongs to Cutler-Orosi Unified School District and we use it on Saturdays when the district does not need it. Cooperation between and among partners made the development of the model possible at a reduced cost.

In July 1997, we began editing the 17 hours of tape collected during the second semester of the program. We used the editing facilities at the Fresno County Office of Education (FCOE) Media and Distance Learning Center. Two media experts, Ruben Alvarez and Brian Nunn, provided technical assistance with the editing machines as needed. The video, "We Make the Road by Walking ... Together," will be available for dissemination through WestEd in Fall 1998.

The Journey Continues

We began our work as "learners" and continue to learn as we go. We now understand more clearly what support is critical to the participants' success. The development of self-confidence and stronger self-esteem is of even greater importance to the participants than we had imagined. Even though we view them as extremely talented and competent, their experience in schools did not affirm their abilities sufficiently well. We have witnessed improvements in the participants' writing and speaking abilities, but more satisfying has been the tremendous sense of accomplishment that the participants themselves see in their literacy skills and in their academic transcripts. Most of the participants successfully carried more than the minimum number of units required by the program, and are making rapid progress toward their credentials.

We have learned a lot about how to support the participants' success during the first two years of the project, however, this remains a work in progress. Creating the model required "all" partners to work together initially and later partner roles became more specific and specialized. The need to remain flexible and open to "how to do this" was perhaps our strongest insight and certainly a posture that we would heartily recommend to others who wish to create a "successful model" for their circumstances. For more information about developing a model to fit your circumstances please contact Celia Reyes at WestEd at 1-510-587-7322.

REFERENCES

American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education. (1997, October). *Preliminary data for 1995.* Presentation by Recruiting New Teachers, Inc. at IASA Regional Conference, San Diego.

Anyon, J. (1981). Social class and school knowledge. *Curriculum Inquiry, 12*(1), 3-12.

California Department of Education. (1992, February). *3*(3).

California State University Institute for Educational Reform. (1996, February). *The teachers who teach our teachers: Teacher preparation programs at the California State University.* Sacramento: Author.

Collier, V. P. (1995). *Promoting academic success for ESL students.* Elizabeth, NJ: New Jersey Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages-Bilingual Educators.

Courts, P. L. (1997). *Multicultural Literacies: Dialect, discourse and diversity.* New York: Peter Lang.

Donaldson, K. B. M. (1996). *Through students' eyes: Combating racism in United States schools.* Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers.

EdSource, Inc. (1997, April). California's teachers: Recruitment, preparation and credentialing. *EdFact Executive Summary* [EdSource, www.edsource.org].

Elbow, P. (1981). *Writing with power: Techniques for mastering the writing process.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Haselkorn, David & Elizabeth Fideler (1996). *Breaking the Class Ceiling: Paraeducator Pathways to Teaching.* Massachusetts: Recruiting New Teachers, Inc.

Healey, M.K. (1982). Using student writing response groups in the classroom. In G. Camp (Ed.), *Teaching writing: Essays from the Bay Area Writing Project.* Montclair, NJ: Boynton/Cook Publishers.

Macedo, Donaldo (1994). *Literacies of Power.* San Francisco: Westview Press.

Moll, L. C. (1992, March). Bilingual classroom studies and community analysis: Some recent trends. *Educational Researcher,* 20-24.

National Center for Education Statistics. (1996, December). *Are limited English proficient students being taught by teachers with LEP training?* [Issue Brief]. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement.

Park, P. (forthcoming). Participatory research, democracy, and community. *Practicing Anthropology.*

Poplin, Mary and Joseph Weeres. (1992) *Voices From the Inside: A Report on Schooling from Inside the Classroom.* John W. Kluge Foundation.

Rubinstein, S. (1997, May/June). A legacy of wisdom and love. *California Association for Bilingual Education Newsletter, 20* (6).

Walker, Alice (1996) *The Same River Twice: Honoring the Difficult.* New York: Scribner.